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ADDRESSED TO  
THE MEMBERS OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION;  
MORE ESPECIALLY  
TO THE READERS OF THE LANCET.

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*Statement of Facts relative to some new Operations lately proposed for the Relief of Stammering: in Refutation of False and Interested Counter-Statements recently published in the Lancet. By JAMES YEARSLEY, M.R.C.S., Surgeon to the Sackville Street Ear Institution; Author of "Contributions to Aural Surgery," &c. &c.*

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IN entering on a refutation of unjust and interested attacks on my operations for the relief of Stammering, it becomes necessary that I should again give a short explanation of the manner in which my attention was first directed to the subject. For some years I have been extensively engaged in the treatment of deafness, and, however it may be accounted for, it is a singular fact, that imperfections of speech are common among the deaf. I had often after removing enlarged tonsils observed, that, as the hearing became more acute, the voice, which in such cases is invariably thick and disagreeable, grew clearer and stronger. It was not unusual to find a nasal speech also disappear in consequence of the increased calibre given to the cavities of the nose by the constant introduction of the catheter in obstruction of the Eustachian tubes; and, in some aggravated cases of deafness, where dumbness had well nigh ensued from the loss of hearing, I have witnessed the re-acquirement of the voice on the restoration of the hearing. These accidental circumstances are so striking, that it is not the first time improvements in the treatment of imperfect vocalization have grown out of the study of aural disease; many of the most rational means of those who profess to relieve stammering or dumbness by elocutionary processes, being founded on the views of Itard, whose mind, like my own, was led to the subject by observing the frequent complication of ear and vocal diseases.

In December, 1840, I treated two boys at the Institution for Diseases of the Ear, and in each case removed enlargements from the throat, which, as I subsequently learned of their friends, had the effect of relieving an impediment of speech from which both had suffered. In this manner I was first led to contemplate the cure of Stammering by operations on the throat; and I may be pardoned for making the mode of origin of the treatment a plea for claiming for it some credibility. The facts thus accidentally developed, cannot but be considered much more valuable than any theory that had resulted from my own mind alone. I may here mention, that, long since the cases alluded to, it has occurred to me to have stammering patients apply for relief, who, some time after the operations, have told me, that they were previously afflicted with deafness, but became cured by the same means that had benefited their Stammer. In one of these cases, I was able to trace the deafness and Stammering to the same cause and time of origin, namely, Scarlatina, which it is well known often leaves a chronic inflammatory condition of the throat. The foregoing statement certainly offers, as it were by analysis and synthesis, a



strong support to the position I have since taken up, that Stammering may sometimes be dependent on morbid conditions of the throat, and, as such, susceptible of amelioration or cure.

Thus much concerning the operations prefatory to my remarks on the usage I have met with at the hands of the Lancet and its conductors.

In the pages of that journal I have been covertly and by inuendo abused for the mode in which my opinions were first promulgated among the profession and public. And the Editor, banding with the herd of stammering schoolmasters, has designated my proceedings "stammering quackery," "humbug operations," and by other equally choice epithets, in which the Lancet vocabulary has ever been so rich. I have also been accused of incorrectly recording the results of my published cases, and this latter accusation is the only part of the charge of which I should care to complain.

On the other hand, I have to accuse my opponents of publishing in the Lancet attacks from anonymous, and evidently ignorant, parties; and others, which were probably feigned for the purpose.—Of delaying the insertion of my answers to such attacks for three or four weeks successively.—Of, in the first instance, pronouncing a judgment *ex cathedra*, without any investigation whatever; and, in the second, of seeking the justification of their own views, by visiting my patients, evidently animated by a foregone conclusion, and, by extracting answers to leading questions (according to the patients' own accounts), unjustly making both them and myself appear the utterers of wilful falsehood.

In explanation of the manner in which my operations were made public, I must state, that it was at the time when the operation, devised by Professor Dieffenbach, was first made known in this country. By a reference to dates, it appears that Dieffenbach performed his first operation upon the *tongue* January 7th, 1841, while I had performed mine upon the *throat* as early as December 5th, 1840, or somewhat more than a month before the section of the tongue at Berlin. In the interim between my first operation, and the appearance of the memoir of Professor Dieffenbach, I had been busily engaged in the prosecution of the subject; and when I unexpectedly found I was not the only surgeon who had been pursuing such investigations, I naturally felt desirous of immediately giving all possible publicity to my operations, in order to avoid being set down as the copyist of any man, however talented. Therefore, I invited the heads of the profession—the public press, especially the medical portion of it, to witness the operations; and to the Editor of the Lancet I addressed an invitation, both in his private and editorial capacities. Though the Editor of the Lancet did not honour me with his presence, I was gratified by the attendance of many of the most eminent medical men, the candour and courtesy of all of whom I feel proud to acknowledge. One of the earliest notices of my operations appeared in The Times, in the beginning of March. This was written by a well-known surgeon, who came at the request of its distinguished Editor, the late Mr. Barnes, to scrutinize my proceedings; and who, after stating candidly what he considered the good effected by the operations, bore testimony to my being "anxious that every particular connected with it should be fully laid before the public and profession; there is no affectation of mystery, and every facility is given to those anxious to make themselves acquainted with the history of the cases presented for consideration."

After some delay a letter descriptive of the operation and its effects was published in the Lancet, but accompanied by some strictures of the Editor to the effect, that one part of the operation was "as old as the hills," and the other "still more insignificant." Surely my critic could not have read my communication; for I did not claim to have performed a new surgical



operation, but submitted that I was "the first to have proposed or performed it specially for the cure of Stammering.\*" During the month of March I operated on more than one hundred patients, in the presence generally of large numbers of medical men; and at the meetings of the Westminster Medical Society it was gratifying to observe, that, for the most part, those who rebuked the operations had not seen them, while they who had witnessed their results defended them. In giving the reports of this discussion the *Lancet* acted unfairly, in making throughout as little as possible of that which was favourable, and the most of that which was unfavourable to me. In operating on a large number of patients in public—I was actuated by a desire of escaping the charge of any thing like empirical proceedings; instead of which, for the very means which ought to have secured me from such an imputation, the *Lancet* has endeavoured to fix this stigma upon me. In refutation of the charge I cannot do better than quote the words of a distinguished physician from the pages of the *Lancet* itself, which will be seen to stand in striking contrast with the illiberality and prejudice of its editorial remarks:—"Dr. Marshall Hall applauded the unostentatious and liberal manner in which Mr. Yearsley had brought his discovery before the profession. He had freely stated the manner in which it had been made—had fairly invited the profession to witness its effects, and now had liberally brought the subject before the society for discussion. Enough had been done to excite the deepest interest in every liberal mind."

Early in April of the present year I published a pamphlet in which was embodied the whole of my then experience of the new treatment, and the facts I had observed relative to the nature, causes, and cure of Stammering. I contended throughout for the existence of a physical variety of impediment, and, although I am free to confess that my hopes were at that time much too sanguine in believing that the majority of cases was complicated with physical difficulty, still I have, in more extended practice (if results be any test whatever), seen the most irrefragable evidence that such cases are met with, and are remedied by operative means; and further, that no other known treatment makes an equally favourable impression upon them.

The names and addresses of 88 patients were given in the first edition of the pamphlet, and it is in the detail of these cases I am accused of incorrectness. The first charge of this kind was published by a stammering schoolmaster in a provincial journal, when three of the cases were mentioned as having been investigated by that person, and found to afford proofs of my inaccuracy. I was able promptly to reply by satisfactory letters from all the parties whose names had been introduced; nevertheless, finding a congenial spirit in the *Lancet*, the letter

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\* The following extract, from a critique upon Dieffenbach's formidable operation, which it is known I altogether repudiate, will serve also to shew the extent of the Editor's anatomical knowledge in reference to surgical operations for Stammering:—In page 21 of the current volume, "If mere alteration of the innervation of the muscles of the organ be the object, why not by a much more *simple*, incomparably less severe, and less dangerous operation, at once divide the hypoglossal nerve, or nerves, as they rest on the hyo-glossus muscles, an operation requiring only a superficial incision of an inch in length." This is *simple* enough, the reader will exclaim, being, in fact, nothing more nor less than a proposal to *paralyze the tongue and the muscles that move the larynx*; a catastrophe which would inevitably happen from the division of such an important motor nerve as the hypoglossal. The Editor must have an anatomy of his own. Strange to say, this notable proposition was adopted by Dr. Clutterbuck, at a subsequent meeting of the London Medical Society. The recollection of his own exploded theories of fever, &c., might surely have served as an antidote to the virus of the Doctor, on that occasion.



in question was transferred, with some amplification, to the pages of that work, although the writer was well aware his assertions had received the contradiction of the very parties on whose testimony he professed to rely. The later accusation of the *Lancet* itself is rather inferential than direct; my own account in *April*, and the *Lancet* account in *July*, are placed in juxtaposition, with great shew of sincerity and respect for facts, and the profession are requested to draw their own conclusions as to the truth of the cases and the applicability of the operations, from the glaring discrepancies in the two statements. Now I would ask, is it fair to make my veracity hinge on the continuance of patients in exactly the same state for four months from the time my history of them appeared in print? After the publication of the pamphlet, many of the cases passed out of my hands, some retrograded, and others, of whom I had given a bad account, improved steadily after the operation; finding this to be the case, I issued a second edition, in which many of the cases given in the first were excluded from the number of successful ones. Moreover, many weeks before the *Lancet* went into the pretended scrutiny of my first cases, I addressed a letter to that journal\*, avowing that I had committed "an error of judgment in publishing cases too recently operated on, and some of them even under treatment at the time I wrote; but I was led to do this by the abuse which was levelled at me, and by the desire to be as open and unreserved as possible." I likewise admitted the operations were "not so extensively successful as I at first anticipated." I then defied (and still defy) my opponents to prove that in any one case I made any misrepresentation whatever. So careful was I of guarding against errata in the pamphlet, that, while the sheets were in the press, I took great pains to see every patient, to make the latest possible notice of his condition. In publishing the addresses of the cases, I had no other object in view save that others, interested in the subject, might be fully cognizant of my proceedings. I continued for months to obtain from time to time, at considerable expense, the real state of those I had operated on: No one exercised a more watchful eye on my proceedings than Mr. Edwin Lee. After witnessing the operations on the genio-glossi muscles in France, he attended closely to mine upwards of a month, and had free access to my patients at all times and under all circumstances. Of one of them he himself took account for two months after the operation, and reported him then as able to "speak with facility, and without stammering." His opinion on the point at issue, considering that he was entirely a stranger, and differing with me in opinion, will be thought of some weight. He writes at the conclusion of his interesting work on Stammering, lately published, "I think it due to Mr. Yearsley (though not agreeing with him as to the nature of stammering, or the manner in which excision of the tonsils and uvula afford relief), to state my belief that he has acted with good faith in giving the correct results of his cases as far as he was able to ascertain them."

But it may here be interposed that the real question to be decided is, the permanent utility or non-utility of my operations for stammering. If so, I complain, and will presently prove, that the *Lancet* version of the state of the patients selected by the Editor himself is incorrect, which must, in common fairness, rebut both charges, whether against the operation or myself.

Great injustice is done me by those who give me credit for limiting my operations to mere excision of the uvula and tonsils. Experience has taught me that these operations frequently fail, whilst other surgical means, such as the

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\* This letter was delayed four weeks by the Editor, and then inserted without any date.



application of the moxa, acupuncture, tying the cellular substance beneath the frenum, have proved beneficial.

That great good can be done in stammering by surgical means there can be now no doubt; but much more investigation into the respective operations upon the tongue or throat must be made before the proper cases for either can be discriminated. If the profession will only give me time, I do flatter myself, with the extensive field afforded me by the establishment of the Orthophonic Institution, that I shall be able to establish facts relative to the more successful treatment of stammering, which cannot but be acceptable to the profession, and conducive to the interests of humanity.

I now proceed to meet the *Lancet* on its own ground, namely, the cases selected for the strictures of that journal, including those brought forward by the stammering schoolmasters as well as those by the Editor himself.

Mr. Butler's case, operated on March 4th, 1841:—The account of the *Lancet* is to the effect that this patient still stammers very badly: he states that "the operation will not cure stammering," but he "thinks himself a little better." Says, that he used to 'duck' his head convulsively before the operation, "of which he has been relieved. While speaking, the nodding, or, as he terms it, the 'ducking' of his head, is at present very violent."

In my account of Mr. B's case, in April, I described him as being comparatively free from his former malady, in consequence of the operation. Though I allow that he is not so well now as he was at that time, it will be seen, even from the *Lancet* account, that the stammer is "a little better," and that he "has been relieved" of the convulsive movements to a considerable extent. In proof that what I wrote in April was truly descriptive of his improvement at that time, I insert the following letter from my patient:—

24th May, 1841.

Sir—In reply to your queries with respect to my case, as published in your pamphlet, I beg to state that case is perfectly correct. I instantly felt, and still feel, a relief from the catch which appeared to prevent my utterance; and though, from ulterior circumstances, the impediment has in a slight degree returned, I have no hesitation in saying I would again undergo the operation for a similar relief. Wishing you every success that you may wish yourself,

I remain, Sir, your obliged and grateful servant,

G. BUTLER.

Case of Wm. Russell:—It has been denied that this boy ever stammered. My treatment of him was for deafness, and it was not till after his reputed cure of stammering that attention was especially directed to the case. The parties who brought the boy to me declared that he had been a stammerer, and it is not very probable that such an evil was imaginary. The acknowledged fact, that his aunt had never noticed any impediment does not militate much against the existence of the defect; because it is well known, that some, even severe stammerers, never betray the affection in the presence of their most familiar friends. Indeed, I have had one patient who is at the present time, and has been for years, a bad stammerer, yet his own wife was never cognizant of it until after his application to me. If the reader will refer to the following letter, the most positive evidence will appear that the boy in question did stammer, while even from the *Lancet* account there is no appearance of impediment at the present time:—

May 25th, 1841.

Sir—I am happy to have it in my power to say that your account of my son's case is perfectly correct; and with respect to the boy, Russell, I have been in the habit of attending the Temperance Coffee House, and have known him for upwards of two years. I never asked for a publication, or a cup of coffee, without noticing the difficulty the boy had in answering, and in fact, unless he could get near some place to



bear upon, he often could not speak. Since you operated on him, there is no longer any difficulty. His friends were not so much aware of his stammering as strangers, but they also now notice a great change in him for the better.

I remain, your humble servant,  
J. W. TOPLISS.

John Topliss's case, operated on December, 1840.—The Lancet's description of this boy's case is to the effect, that "he presents a remarkable peculiarity of pronunciation, which his grandmother called 'Stammering.' In truth, it is an hereditary peculiarity of pronunciation, unaccompanied by the spasmodic action necessary to stammering." This is absurd: if the writer had had the knowledge of a tyro on the subject of stammering, he would have been aware, that some of the most aggravated cases are those in which the stuttering repetition of the first sound of the word, and all convulsive motion of the face or body, are entirely absent. J. W. Topliss, the father of the boy, complains of the manner in which the agent of the Lancet conducted his pseudo-investigation. He accosted him with—"Well, your son is not cured," thus attempting, as he complains, to put the words into his mouth. Topliss assures me, that the account of the Lancet is grossly incorrect; and has written the following letter, requesting no such visits may be paid him in future:—

*Wednesday, Aug. 11, 1841.*

Sir—I beg to inform you that my son still continues perfectly relieved from stammering up to the present time. I have had so many visits from different persons, who from their manner are evidently desirous of putting down your new operations, which have done so much good in my own family, that I shall be glad if you would send a letter with anybody who wishes to see or examine my child on the subject. I should not myself have been operated upon, if it had not benefited my son.

To James Yearsley, Esq.,  
29, Sackville Street.

Your most obedient and humble servant,  
J. W. TOPLISS.

Case of Frederick West, operated on March 9th.—The envoy of the Lancet had not been able to communicate with Mr. West, but Mr. W. tells me, he is always to be found at his address, and that it is impossible the writer could have called. As the same incapability of finding other of my cured cases has happened to the Lancet and my assailants, I cannot but be of the same opinion with my patient.

The following letter is from Mr. West, five months after the operation:—

*August, 1841.*

Sir—Allow me to return my most sincere thanks for the truly wonderful cure I have received under your hands. I had been an inveterate stammerer from my earliest infancy, and am now in my twenty-first year. Since the operation, I have had no symptom of relapse as it regards stammering, which might have been feared from the cure being so instantaneous: but instead of which, I have found great relief to my breath, as, being a brass-founder by business, the effluvia from the metal used much to affect me; but since the removal of the uvula, while others have felt the effects, I have not, which has induced me to attribute it to the above removal, and think it my duty to acquaint you with that circumstance. Allow me again to return you my best thanks, and be assured, Sir,

Mr. Yearsley,  
29, Sackville Street, Piccadilly.

I am your much obliged and grateful servant,  
F. WEST.

Case of James Wicton, operated on March 9th.—The Lancet prints the following letter from Mrs. Wicton: "Sir, in answer to your note this morning, I write these few lines to inform you, that my son has been under two operations, and he is no better." *May 1st, 1841.*

On a former occasion, I admitted that this case had "relapsed; but, at the time it was published, he gave every indication of complete cure, having remained free from a most aggravated stammer for upwards of a month." In



substantiation of my account of Wicton's case, I transcribe the following letters from himself and his brother:—

*Greenwich, June 22, 1841.*

Dear Sir—I am very sorry to find that you have had such reports about my brother's case; but when I wrote to you, Sir, I will assure you that he was better and felt relief from the operation, but it fell off afterwards, and I was very sorry for it; but when I wrote to you it was the truth, and I hope he will find benefit from you yet, Sir.

I remain yours most humbly,

WM. WICTON.

*Greenwich, April 2, 1841.*

Dear Sir—I have taken the opportunity of writing these few lines to you, to inform you how I learnt stammering. When I was a boy, about four years old, I went to a school, and there was a boy there that stammered, and from that time I have done it; and I have tried different things for it, and could get no benefit from it: and I have been in the Asylum School at Greenwich, and they did all in their power to stop it, but they could not, and I have been getting worse and worse ever since, and particularly for these last two years; and I could get no good until I came to you, Mr. Yearsley. I came to you on the 8th of March, and saw you, and you operated on me on the 9th of March before a very large assembly of medical gentlemen, and I found great relief from it; and you operated on me again on the 24th of March, and I found still greater benefit from that. I saw you on the 31st, but you did not operate on me then; and I would be operated on twenty times more if I was in the same state again, and I hope that all persons will follow my plan; and I return you, Sir, many thanks for the good that you have done me.

I remain your most humble servant,

JAMES WICTON.

Case of John Burroughs, operated on March 12th.—I pronounced my opinion of J. B., that he “no longer stammers, but under circumstances when most of us would stammer.” The *Lancet* allows that he is “greatly improved,” but will have it that he “stammers as usual, when nervous.” In spite of this, I maintain my assertion, and have no doubt whatever, that any unprejudiced person, seeing his former and present condition, would subscribe to the truth of my account. I regret that I cannot publish any communication from the patient himself, he being at the present time so seriously ill as to be prevented writing, but even from the *Lancet* account, this case is shewn to be “greatly improved.”

Case of George Nixon, operated on March 16.—In contradiction to my account, the *Lancet* states in one version of their report, that he is “greatly relieved, but stammers as usual, when nervous;” in another, that “his stammering is the same as before the operation.” I can only say, that my favourable report of him in April was in every respect true at that time, and though he appears to have retrograded, still, when I saw him not long ago, he pronounced himself benefited by the operation.

Case of William Dixon, operated on March 22.—One of my critics found out a person of the same name at the address given, who “never had the misfortune to stammer.” The correct address is 29, Bird Street, West Square, Lambeth. W. D. writes me the following letter five months after the operation.

Sir—A gentleman called on my mother yesterday, and I being from home, he left word that I was to write as soon as possible, and state what benefit I have derived from the operation which you performed upon me, and I now am happy in stating, that since the operation there scarcely remains any impediment in my speech at all.

Yours, gratefully,

WILLIAM DIXON.

29, Bird Street, Aug. 24, 1841.

Case of W. Briggs, operated on March 22.—My report of this case extends up to March 30th, at which time he presented an extraordinary improvement. He attended me constantly for several weeks, and spoke fluently to the gentle-



men who examined him. He even confronted one of the most notorious elocutionary teachers, who had treated him in vain, declaring to him that he was cured by my operations. In June he writes to another teacher of the same class, stating the operation had been performed "without any benefit." Admitting the relapse in this instance at the present time, I defy any one to contravene what I have written above; and I strongly suspect the letter of W. B. was composed at the instance of the elocutionist, under whose control he was at the time he wrote.

Cases of Edwin Camplin, Charles Wainwright, and Thomas Cook, operated on in March.—These cases appear to have relapsed, but they were each improved at the time I recorded them.

Case of Thomas Raymond, operated on March 16.—I reported of this case, April the 4th, that, to use his own words, "the stammer was much diminished, and wonderfully easier in the chest." "Is a singer, and feels his voice much improved," &c. The Lancet maintains that "the stammer is exactly the same," but allows that a pain in the side, formerly felt, "has been relieved." The Lancet states, that he was angry at the report I made of his singing; from the context it is evident I was made to have instanced him as a professional singer, which any one who reads what I really said, will perceive was far from the truth. As my warranty for stating that his singing voice was improved by the operation, and that the stammer was relieved, I append the following letter, addressed to me about the time I inquired respecting his voice:—

*April 14, 1841.*

Sir—In answer to your request this morning respecting singing, not thinking you would have asked me such a question, I certainly have noticed to myself, that my voice can go much higher than it usually did, and can positively say that I speak more fluently since the operation; but I have noticed that I am worse in dull weather. I shall attend to the pills you prescribed for me, and (if you please) I will call on you next Sunday morning.

Yours, respectfully,

THOMAS RAYMOND.

26, Monmouth Street,  
Seven Dials.

Case of Henry Hall, operated on February 17th.—This case has relapsed, but the Lancet admits "he thought his stammering better" after the operation.

Case of Ellen Hollands, operated on March 24.—

Of this case the Editor of the Lancet of July, reports thus of his visit:

"Ellen Holland from home. Her mother states that her daughter is out of health, and now under the medical treatment of Mr. Yearsley; that she does not know if her daughter be better of her stammering; that she is a poor widow with two 'on 'em,' and 'having her bread to get, she wishes to give offence to no one.'"

These very expressions corroborate the poor woman's own report to me of this visit: she told me that the manner of the person who called upon her "flustered her so much," that she did not know what to say:—"He said he knowed my daughter was not better; but, Sir, how could he tell when he had not seen her?"

I have since received the following letter, testifying to her great improvement, five months subsequently to the operation:—

*August, 1841.*

Sir—I feel in duty bound to return you my sincere thanks for the benefit I have already derived from the operation you performed on me. Before I underwent that, I could not utter a sentence for some time; but I have found since the operation, that I can speak in much less time and with greater ease, and I believe, if my bodily health had been better, I should be enabled to speak still better; I do, therefore, for all your kindness and attention to me, beg to return you my most grateful acknowledgments, and remain, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

E. HOLLANDS.

To Dr. Yearsley,



I HAVE endeavoured to bring the treatment of vocal maladies within the pale of the surgical art. The recent contemporaneous labours of Dieffenbach, Velpeau, Baudin, Amussat, Phillips, Lucas, Baird, and numerous others, have tended to the same end; but the Lancet in its characteristic spirit, without even having investigated the subject, although invited to do so, without having watched the progress of a single case from its outset, and setting aside all *esprit de corps*, at once puts its veto against such an innovation, and rallies round the schoolmaster. But, in the substantiation of the foregoing cases, the most unequivocal proof that good may be effected in cases of stammering by surgical operations is afforded. Nevertheless, I am induced to strengthen my cause by adding a few letters, most of them sent me spontaneously by the writers; I do this, because, after what has occurred, it will be far more convincing to let the good I have effected speak thus for me, than the mere reiteration of my former opinion. It will be observed I give the initials only of my patients, as I do not think it fair to them or myself, that they should be subjected to the same system of unfair espionage as that already practised on other cases. My adversaries shall have no further opportunity of hunting up and tampering with patients as they have done. The letters here published, and the cases themselves, shall be open to *honest* inquirers who will apply to me, and of them the more the better. It is fit I should state that I cannot divine the cause of the spiteful animus that has been manifested against me in the pages of the Lancet, *unless it be that my own projected labours in a new weekly medical periodical have already awakened feelings of rivalry.*

### CASES\*.

Cases of two boys belonging to a metropolitan national school, who were operated on: Edward F——, April 27, and Henry B——, May 5th. It will be seen the letter from the superintendent of the school is dated more than three months after the operation:—

C—— C—— NATIONAL SCHOOL, August 2, 1841.

Sir—As Master of the above Institution, I cannot refrain from addressing you respecting two boys under my care, who were much afflicted with stammering. Above three months since I was informed that they were under your medical advice; and I am most happy to testify, that in one case, that of H. B., the stammering was *quite overcome*, and he continues to speak and read fluently. In the other case, that of E. F., whose speech was so bad that he could not read without great pain and much contortion of the countenance, the impediment was so far overcome that he now reads and speaks with tolerable ease. Considering, Sir, how great the benefit your invaluable exertions may prove to the public at large if the cases be made known, I shall feel it my duty to give as much publicity as possible to the facts.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

To James Yearsley, Esq.

H. B. A.

The case of P. B., to which the annexed note refers, was of the most aggravated and peculiar nature, and particularly attracted the notice of all the medical men present. The uvula and diseased tonsils were removed March 9, with immediate benefit; and it will be seen from his employer's account that the improvement is permanent.

Sir—Your patient has commissioned me to send his most grateful thanks for the great relief he has had from an impediment, the most severe I have ever known any person before afflicted with. Your obedient servant,

July 29, 1840.

J. K. for P. B.

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\* The cases of gratuitous patients only are quoted, not feeling myself at liberty to adduce any from my private practice.



July 27, 1841.

Sir—Four months have passed away since you first attempted to remove my impediment by your new operations, of the value of which I was convinced from the first moment I heard of them. I could always feel that some physical difficulty existed in my throat, and was quite sensible that if I did not stammer, I should not be nervous. You operated on me April 5th, and from that time to this, I have scarcely experienced any difficulty. Occasionally I make a little boggle; but not more so than most people do, and I should think it impossible that you can, even in the most successful case, altogether remove all trace of impediment. That you will cure many, and more or less relieve most of your patients, I feel quite certain; and for the important improvements you have made in your profession, I consider you are entitled to the gratitude of your fellow-men. You may fairly set mine down as a cured case, for which I shall ever be,

Your obedient and humble servant,

T. W.

A case operated on, six months before the date of the letter:—

August 20, 1841.

Dear Sir—Accept my most grateful thanks for the almost miraculous improvement that you have effected in my speech: had I the means, believe me, I would shew my gratitude other ways than in words. I am now, Sir, twenty-seven years of age and eight months, and am one of the factory porters of the eminent firm of Messrs. \* \* \*

\* \* \* and amongst upwards of one hundred persons whom they employ, and to most of whom I am in the daily habit of talking, there is not one person among them, but will willingly bear testimony to the great improvement you have made in my articulation, which, from the earliest period of my childhood, has been most woefully imperfect. My father and mother who now are both living, affirm that when I was about three years old, I could not utter one intelligible word, they therefore applied to several medical gentlemen who, after examining my mouth, declared their opinion to be, that there was no malformation of the mouth, and it was only a habit, and that I should talk well enough by and by; the result was, that when I began to talk, it was with a dreadful Stammer, which grew with my growth, and strengthened with my strength, until fortunately hearing of the improvement and the cure you were affording to so many in my situation by your skilful operations, which induced me to apply to you, Sir, and shall be ever proud and grateful to attest to the success that has attended your operations.

I remain, dear Sir, with respect and gratitude,  
R. E. C.

The following two letters are written by the *same* person respecting *her* son, who was operated on the beginning of March, so that the last letter was written five months after the operation:—

47, B——— R———, May 6, 1841.

Sir—I have very great pleasure indeed in informing you, that my son, W. continues to improve in his speech most satisfactory to himself and me; his case was so decidedly a bad one, and accompanied with other peculiar difficulties, that the amendment could *only* be progressive, and less to the notice of *others* than to *ourselves*: from the habitual silence he has observed in company or to strangers for many years, he is naturally timid of conversing *now*; but all friends who hear him unreservedly speak, rejoice for him, at the happy result of the operation. *For him* and myself I return you our grateful thanks; and I bless God for the far greater freedom of speech that my son now possesses through your MEANS.

Respectfully and gratefully I remain,

H. L.

July 29th, 1841.

Dear Sir—I have great pleasure in informing you that my son, W. L., has derived considerable improvement in his speech by your attention and treatment



of his case; it must be evident to every person who knows him, the benefit he has derived from it; the workmen in like employment with himself, express their surprise and satisfaction at it, and will willingly bear testimony to the same; should *such* ever be of service to you, I give you the names of a few of them, who have known him several years. When I reflect on my Son's former miserable utterance, and the painful difficulty he had in talking, I cannot but rejoice gratefully at his present amendment, and the great good you have done to him. I have the pleasing expectation that he will soon attain to the knowledge of reading, hitherto a task beyond his capability till assisted by your means of relief. It is very satisfactory to perceive yet a gradual improvement in him, and the convulsed state of his body when speaking, of little moment *now*, previous to your seeing him *that* was distressing to witness. As often as circumstances will allow of it, I shall wish you to see his improvement, and to give him any advice you think proper on the necessity of his *own* attention to his advancement in speaking yet more perfectly; many private friends observe William's improvement, and wish success to your practice, for the benefit of others like afflicted with him.

Respectfully I remain,

H. L.

A case operated on, nearly six months before the writing of the following:—

*August 10, 1841.*

Sir—I had a very bad impediment in my speech for fifteen years. It came on me when I was about six years old, and it seemed to get worse and worse. Sometimes it was very painful to me to speak, particularly in words beginning with B, P, or M, and caused me pain inwardly and stoppage in the throat, so that I could not speak for some time: when I was in a hurry it was worse. It never left me one hour since it came on me until the month of March last, when I was operated on by Mr. Yearsley, and ever since I have been getting better every day, and am now almost well. I return you great thanks for your kindness, for the relief I have received from you.

Your humble servant,

J. B.

Five months since the operations:—

Sir—I take the liberty of writing to you that I have received a great deal of benefit from the operation you performed on me. Before I was operated on, I could not speak half a dozen words without stammering; but, thank God, I am now able to talk to my friends without half the trouble. I mend better and better every day. I was operated on in March, and ever since I have mended greatly. I am sure I shall get rid of it altogether very soon.

Before the operations, too, I was used to sore throats. I am in very good health at present.

*August 24, 1841.*

I remain your humble servant,

W. R.

A letter written more than four months after the operations:—

*July 29, 1841.*

Sir—I beg leave most gratefully to acknowledge the benefits that I have received since I had the operation performed last April. I had been afflicted with an impediment in my speech from my infancy, which, thank God, is now so much relieved, and my general health is also greatly improved. I am well convinced that the mental sufferings of Stammerers are not known; for had it not been for a knowledge of religion I should have terminated my life, so miserable and unhappy: but since the operation I have been able to converse with a degree of pleasure that I never knew the blessing of before.

Accept the eternal gratitude of your humble servant,

H. S.

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Case of G——e C——e.

*July 26, 1841.*

Sir—In reply to your note of this morning, inquiring the result of your operations in my case, I beg to transmit the following:—

It was not until I was about four or five years old, that my voice was in anywise affected with stammering, from that time until about ten years of age I can say very



little respecting myself, being too young to pay any attention to the subject; at ten years of age I was sent to school, and I well remember was not allowed to read anything, on account of the almost utter impossibility of pronouncing a single word in presence of my tutor; such being signified to my parents, it was stipulated that I should only be taught writing and ciphering. I continued at this for some time, about two years. I then left school, and at that time could scarcely speak, much less hold converse with a stranger,—as to delivering a message, I could much quicker decipher it with my pencil than I could give utterance to it with my tongue. I had left school, so far as writing and ciphering were concerned, and it was suggested that it would be advisable for me to get a “smattering of Latin,” with a view to give the organ of speech a kind of drill or exercise, beyond the vernacular sounds to which I was accustomed, which, as it was said, would facilitate my attempts to break myself of Stammering. But this was in vain; I was at the Latin tongue exactly a year, and I do not recollect that I pronounced a single word the whole time in the presence of my preceptor: I was obliged to learn the tasks by heart, and stand at his desk and write them upon a slate. From fifteen to twenty I was no better than when at school; unable to hold converse with my acquaintance, I was often the jeer and mock of the aged and the young, which increased rather than diminished the malady, and being fond of study I was not often to be seen mingling with society. From twenty to twenty-five, being more particularly compelled to mix with the world, I considered myself somewhat better, that is, I could hold converse with persons with whom I was well acquainted more easily than I heretofore had done, they often anticipating and expressing my thoughts before I could give utterance to them myself, which was done in kindness, although it injured rather than benefited me, because it made me unable to proceed further in the conversation. When strangers addressed me, if they were in a higher circle of life than myself, I invariably found great difficulty in answering them, but if in a similar sphere to myself the difficulty was less, and in talking to children I do not ever remember to have experienced the least difficulty. From twenty-five to the present time I have been sometimes better and sometimes worse. Easterly winds and wet weather were always prejudicial to me; as also was a cold, which often precluded me from uttering the most familiar words. I am not a “firm believer” in lunar influences upon the human frame; but thus much I must assert, that when the moon was on the wane I was invariably much better than when she was either new or at full,—at full I was worst. I have delivered lectures to an assemblage of persons, without any of them, except those acquainted with me, being sensible of my vocal imperfection; at other times I have attempted to lecture, and have stumbled at the introduction, which has compelled me to retire from the lecture table; at the time when I could not deliver a message orally, or read a paragraph in a newspaper, I could read without any hesitation any subject in the style of sacred literature. I was always too short-breathed for singing, but I never stumbled in that: in reciting poetry, the case is much the same; Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Pope’s *Essay on Man*, *Dunciad*, Thomson’s *Seasons*, or in fact anything demanding a sonorous tone, I could manage pretty well, if no person was near me. Lyrics, or odes, I never could read with fluency. Words commencing with the following consonants were always very hard for me to speak:—b, c, d, f, k, l, n, p, r, s, t, w, wr, x, y, z.

The preceding observations refer to times prior to the 25th of April of this year, when I first consulted you, and you then removed the uvula from my throat, since which time I have gradually improved in uttering words which once were very difficult. In fact, since the operation, I have not shewn the slightest signs of convulsive symptoms in attempting to speak to any person, which before was very frequent. On the 30th of May I went to Twickenham to see my friends, who knew nothing of what I had been doing; and I had not been with them half an hour, before I was asked “What I had done with the impediment in my speech? for I seemed to have quite lost it.” I am not yet quite cured; but such an improvement has taken place, that the persons acquainted with me invariably notice it, and I believe that I shall, ere long, be able to say that I am quite free from any vocal imperfection. Since the loss of the uvula, I can modulate my voice to any tone I please, with perfect ease. (By the by, I would strongly recommend all public speakers to submit to the operation of excision of the uvula; the pain is not worth mentioning, and the soreness, if the stomach is in good order, only continues about four days; they would more distinctly articulate their words, and would be freed from that disagreeable hoarseness which is a certain subsequence to long speeches.) I can read aloud now for two hours,



easier than I could before one hour. The benefit I have received from your treatment, if taken numerically, as near as I am able to say, and without exaggeration, may be thus stated:—

25th April, 1841, prior to the operation the difficulty may be stated as 6.

26th July, —, after ditto ditto as 2.

Some persons may imagine that, by the excision of the uvula, much inconvenience will be experienced for want of it in its proper place; but as for that I feel no more the loss of it than of a lock of hair from my head.

As well as the improvement in my voice, I have got completely clear of that disagreeable noise, called snoring; previous to the operation, I used to snore so very loud, that I have been heard of a night several score yards distant from my bed; and if I had had a little extra to drink, it was intolerable. I can also hear more distinctly than I could before. Until I read the treatise on Stammering, written by you, I had always been told that Stammering was a “nervous influence,” or was caused by weakness of nerves; but it was a tale I did not credit, although I was unable to say what it was. Long before I heard anything of your work, I thought that if a “nervous influence” was the cause of Stammering, it could not much matter in what tone of voice I was reading, for the difficulty of utterance must be the same; for I well knew that if I could always, in speaking and reading, keep the same tone as is required to read prayers, or any subject of the like nature, I should never be suspected of vocal disability. I had never dreamed of a physical difficulty, but now having had the physical difficulty removed, it matters not to me in what tone I am reading or speaking, for I have lost nearly all the stammering, and the only inconvenience I feel now is sometimes “halting” at a word, which once was very difficult to speak; but, as I said before, I believe this will leave me in a short time. The habits of years are not lost in a day. Nervous influence exists only as a natural sequence to the physical difficulty, and it exerts its power only in the same ratio as the organs of speech are distorted or distressed by being compelled to utter words in a different tone to that which is adapted to their capability. The cause therefore of the nervous affection, is simply the consciousness of being not able to give utterance to those words, or that kind of diction which may at the moment be required.

I mentioned in a former part of this letter, having delivered lectures without my audience being aware of my impediment. I ought to have added, that I was totally unable to do this without having previously taken a strong stimulant.

These few observations hastily thrown together, I am ready at any time to substantiate, and for the present beg to subscribe myself,

Sir, your very obedient servant,

G. C.

A letter from the Father of the two patients therein referred to, who were both operated on four months ago:

*London, August 12, 1841.*

Sir—I beg to acknowledge with feelings of gratitude the great benefit my daughter Jane Holt, and my son Frederick Holt, have derived from your operations. This day my daughter called upon a lady who was aware that I had sent my two children to you, (and, I must add, rather blamed their mother for allowing them to be operated upon). I have since seen the lady, and to her great surprise acknowledged to me that Jane did not stammer in the least. It is with the same pleasure, that I am enabled to inform you my son is also, I might say, quite cured; he does not now find any impediment before the greatest stranger, except in the word Yes. As I have a very large family, seven in number, it is quite out of my power to repay you for the benefit they have derived; but I feel it my duty to make this acknowledgment, and beg to tender you my heartfelt thanks; and should you at any time require either of my children, as proof of your ability, my daughter Jane is now at home, and shall with pleasure attend upon you. My son Fred. is out at place, and I could not so conveniently get his master's leave. For myself, I consider Frederick's the greatest cure of the two, as he had stammered ever since he recovered from the cholera, which he had when he was about four years of age.

I am, Sir, grateful for your goodness,

and beg to remain,

your obedient humble servant,

J. H.



## Case of W. W. R.

Honoured Sir—Accept my grateful thanks for all your kindness to me. I had been afflicted with stammering for many years, and was prevented by my malady from getting on in the world. When I applied to you I hoped rather than expected to obtain relief; but I am proud and thankful to acknowledge, that in my case your treatment has been strikingly successful. I believe I have seen you but six or seven times in as many months, and I am, since the operation on my throat, quite delivered from my former impediment, though I should not from anything in the throat itself know that any operation had been performed. Again tendering you my most heartfelt thanks,

I remain your obedient servant;

August 4th.

W. W. R.

IN the Third Contribution to Aural Surgery, published in 1840, I pointed out the frequent necessity of removing the uvula, tonsils, &c., in deafness. I related the case of a gentleman whose elongated uvula had caused an irritable cough for upwards of twenty years. There is no doubt but that it had kept up a general irritation of the mucous surface, for the cough was instantly cured, and considerable amelioration of the hearing soon followed the excision.

A few days ago, I was called upon to remove the uvula from a clergyman, who declared to me that it had been a constant discomfort to him for many years. He had spent at least four or five hundred pounds in consultations and travelling abroad, in order to obtain a healthier condition of the throat. His medical advisers had frequently pointed out the uvula as the source of the evil, and his own feelings confirmed their opinion; but, strange to say, none had advised its excision. Being unable to use his voice for any length of time, he had been necessitated to employ a curate. There could be no doubt of the propriety of excision in such a case, and the result has justified the practice. Immediate relief was experienced.

While I write, a patient reports to me, that, before the removal of the uvula, he had frequently coughed for two or three hours incessantly, and thought it strange that nothing was ever expectorated. These fits of coughing had produced intolerable headaches. Since the operation he is conscious that the source of these unpleasant symptoms is removed, and he has not had an attack since. A case lately occurred at the Ear Institution, in which the patient had suffered many years from an habitual tickling cough, and a sense of suffocation if he attempted to lie on his back, both of which symptoms were permanently removed by the excision of an elongated uvula.

With respect to the effect of the removal of diseased growths from the throat, especially the enlarged uvula, on the quality of the voice, I cannot do better than quote from a former publication, as subsequent experience has only confirmed the opinion I then expressed.

“The fact that the uvula may be removed without subsequent inconvenience is of the deepest interest to the lovers of song, for many of my patients—endowed with a musical ear, to whom relief has been afforded by the operations, have discovered that the tone and compass of the voice is thereby improved and increased. In numerous cases from one to three notes in the musical scale have been gained, and this augmented development of the voice does not take place, as supposed, in the falsetto, but in the natural register. So constant is this singular effect, that it will not surprise me if the removal of the uvula should come to be considered essential to a successful musical education.”

The propriety of the removal of enlarged tonsils is universally conceded by the profession; but it has been comparatively rarely done, and the means taken are frequently ineffective; caustic applications take months to accomplish it, and excision with scissors, or even with what is called the guillotine knife, is a bungling



affair in the most expert hands. With a proper shaped scalpel and powerful Asselini's tenaculum, and with moderate skill, it is the work of a moment, and perfectly free from all risk, and most frequently void of pain. I have often, very often, excised tonsils, without the patient being conscious of the employment of a knife, and children of the most tender age have stood up before me, and submitted to the operation without a murmur.

Insignificant as may appear the removal of the uvula, I have known several instances in which a great botch has been made of this little operation by surgeons who have attempted the cure of stammering upon my plan. Sometimes the uvula is webbed by a prolongation of the posterior arches almost to its very extremity. In such a case the snipping cannot be made sufficiently high up to produce the desired effect without the posterior arches being previously divided. There are other peculiarities which my limits will not admit of particularizing, but which, if adduced, would shew that discrimination and judgment are required in its performance.

Excision of tonsils again is easy enough to any surgeon who has been accustomed to perform it; but to the tyro it is one of the most bothering and perplexing in surgery, and neither is it in such hands altogether free from danger.

I have now removed enlarged tonsils, for the various imperfections of speech, for deafness, for difficult deglutition, for impeded respiration, and for other infirmities, more than five hundred times, and have never seen the slightest accident or ill effect; and as to disorganizing the throat by the operation, of which my adversaries accuse me, it is, in truth, nothing more than *the removal of disorganization*.

On a view of the whole subject, Reader, can I not, with much truth and propriety, quote the words of the Lancet, begging that the humble *I* may be substituted for the magniloquent editorial *We*:—"We consider that any remarks upon the above cases, or upon the applicability of the operation to the object proposed, would be quite superfluous, we therefore leave the facts such as we have found them, to the judgment and discrimination of our readers."

"I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word."

*Shakespear.*



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